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Two essential elements for course and departmental enrichment of junior college English programs are prescribed: (1) recruitment of properly trained faculty and (2) inservice training. Desirable educational and professional qualifications for teachers are discussed in terms of the particular needs of the junior college student. Areas of professional growth which are considered include (1) additional graduate course work, (2) suggestions for an intradepartmental file, and (3) seminars to encourage exchange of ideas among the staff. (CW)

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PREPARATION AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR

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> For all its promise, for all the devotion and enthusiasm of its drivers, the vehicle [the two-year college] is in many respects still in the Model T stage of its development ... going down the educational superhighway hell for leather.
>
> "How Good Are the Junior Colleges?"
> Russell Lynes

Russell Lynes' monumental study in this month's Harper's might make one think there is no planning in the two-year college program--no planning, that is, except for parking lots. Can a Model T institution have any direction? If the machine holds up, the proper driver might be able to steer it god-only-knows-where. Of course, like Lynes, I admit my observation "is an obvious generalization" and, again like Lynes, "I do not quite trust it myself." But if we find the right persons to teach the hundreds of thousands of students flocking to the two-year college, we might be able, in time, to produce a Galaxie that will take every two-year college student where he can be reasonably expected to go. But it will take more than mere enthusiasm. It takes the proper driver-training and the right servicing, not only of the vehicle but also of the driver. The two-year English instructor must be selected carefully, broken in properly, and oiled regularly.

The Preparation of the Two-Year College English Instructor

When we choose the two-year college English instructor, we focus on two essential qualities: (1) his formal education and (2) his professional background. Though they are interested in the candidate's personal qualities, the department chairman and academic dean generally ask themselves two questions: What course work did the candidate "take" in his undergraduate and graduate preparation? What or how much teaching experience has he?

The search for staff is long and exhausting. In the first place, our search, unlike the one conducted yearly by most four-year institutions, is for composition instructors almost exclusively, not literature specialists. In October, November, and early December, we stress the Ph.D. (The Association feels we should have many doctorates in a department our size; we don't have them, so we start looking for them.) In late December and early January, having found no Ph.D., we seek honor graduates with M.A. degrees (Phi Beta Kappas will do). In late January and thereafter we hire likely candidates with M.A. degrees.

We are, of course, interested in the best we can find, though it is often quite difficult to identify them. We start with credentials--transcripts of grades. For practical reasons we look at credits in English: What graduate English courses has he had? Such matters are most important, for before we can become interested in a candidate, he must have a sufficient number of graduate course hours in English. To meet Association requirements, he must have x hours of graduate work in English, regardless of his other course

credits. The two-year institution itself often sets a standard higher than Association demands. We must, then, look for a specific number of hours in English. If our search turns up a promising candidate with insufficient course credits in English, we advise him to get the proper number of hours and apply again. Some do. Most don't.

Having looked at his English course background, we look at the candidate's other course work. We prefer a person with a broad background in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Considering the varied backgrounds (labor, business, professional) and interests (prospective nurses, teachers, mechanics, doctors, hotel managers, engineers, hair dressers, lawyers) of our students, we feel a person with a liberal education is a more likely candidate for a two-year college English classroom than those with narrow academic specialties. Highly specialized persons rarely are interested in staying with us. As they well should, they want to teach their specialities (and often do so even when they shouldn't). They do not as a rule enjoy the demands of the freshman composition class--the intellectual shortcomings of many of the students, the endless paper grading, the student conferences in which they must rehash what they already covered in class. With few exceptions these specialists are not happy in the two-year college. When we receive "feeler" applications from them, we are not convinced they are serious--unless something unusual in their background or personal comments suggests that they want to be with us. Nevertheless, we do answer their applications and hope secretly they are serious. We find, however, that these candidates rarely follow up their first letter.

When our applicant is inexperienced--a person fresh out of graduate school and with no teaching experience--we look carefully at his record of course work. We prefer that he have as broad a background as possible. (We are, of course, impressed by A's and B's and want at least most of our candidates to be graduates of Berkeley, Harvard, or Yale. We might have encouraged Russell Lynes--if he had had x graduate hours in English.) Credits in the humanities and social sciences interest us most. Some psychology doesn't hurt. But we look most carefully at English credits. We like the inexperienced candidate to have had course work in writing (freshman composition, advanced composition, creative writing), language (advanced grammar, linguistics, history of the English language, a foreign language or two), literature (American, British and world), literary criticism, and speech. Because our second semester freshman English course includes study of the short story, the drama, and the novel, we like to see that the candidate has studied these genres, though special courses in the short story, novel, or drama are not necessary.

Despite the objection that many of us have to "ed" courses, we have found that a candidate fresh out of graduate school is better off for having had some education courses. A candidate is more likely, for instance, to understand the demands imposed on the two-year college instructor if he has taken a course in "Junior College." (We readily admit that he learns more in the first month of teaching than he did in his course work. But then he also probably learns more about English than he did in his master's program-- at least about the application of his knowledge.) Education courses are useful if they have not been substitutes for English subject-matter courses. A candidate who has studied tests and measurements or administration or even guidance will usually find such information helpful in handling the more dreary aspects of two-year college business--recognizing that a low placement test score may explain why Joe Brown, that hard-working but failing student, doesn't understand transition; knowing that the state office of education demands that absence records be kept faithfully; realizing that the very religious student doesn't always warmly accept unconventional

religious views. Most of those who have taken education courses have done some intern or student or practice teaching. Often that teaching experience has made the candidate aware of the blunt realities of the two-year college classroom. He is not likely to panic at the fatality rate; the drop-out rate; the apathy of some of the students; the terror of the first, second, third stack of compositions that must be marked and graded; the administrative headaches of attendance reports, grades, drop and add notices, excessive absence notices, and various other tedious necessities that too often gripe the more idealistic straight M.A.

The "open door" policy and local demands on the community college make persons with "non-academic" specialties sometimes prime candidates for a two-year English department staff. Since the local newspaper needs reporters, at its request the community college offers Introduction to Journalism, a fairly popular course. Thus we need at least one person with journalistic experience, possibly a minor in journalism. The influx of foreign-born students (possibly Cuban refugees) makes a person with some background in teaching English to the foreign-born highly desirable. Since most institutions make provisions for college-level under-achievers or reluctant learners, persons who have studied remedial English techniques are valuable additions to a two-year college English staff. In many institutions new special services (at St. Petersburg Junior College we call it "Directed Studies") demand persons with special training in handling teaching machinery. The plethora of materials available on tapes, records, and television can be quite useful if we know how to use them. The overhead projector is an invaluable tool to those aware of its potentials. Programmed materials abound for those who can use them intelligently, not as substitutes for teachers or teaching, but as supplements and self-helps. Some graduate schools offer courses in these "practical" specialties, and the products of such schools can bring much-needed information to a two-year college English staff.

To coin a phrase, there is no substitute for experience. We look for applicants with teaching experience, persons who as a result of hours in the classroom know how to answer questions, make assignments, mark papers. Applications that reveal teaching experience get first consideration by practically any two-year college administrator. With a heavy schedule of freshman English to staff, we are interested in those persons who can teach composition, those who have taught composition in either high school or college. When our candidates have had no experience as regular staff members of either high school, two-year college, or four-year institution, we look for those who have been graduate assistants. We find that most ex-graduate assistants know how to mark and grade a freshman theme--not merely put on a grade, but also make intelligible and helpful comments.

Although we seek first those persons with college teaching experience, persons accustomed to working with college-age minds, we get many of our better instructors from the high schools of the state or the county, for excellent persons can be found in public schools everywhere. (Since 1963, the St. Petersburg campus of St. Petersburg Junior College has recruited seventeen new instructors; eight from Florida high schools--two of them department chairmen, four from university graduate programs--all graduate assistants, five from four-year institutions.) As those who teach in two-year colleges know, advanced high school English sections, unfortunately, are often more challenging than the average composition section of two-year college students. We find that experienced high school instructors can handle student problems. They also understand the administrative problems of an English department. No matter where we find our faculty, however, we find no substitute for classroom experience. A strong academic background is important, have no doubt about that, but experience is an attractive

quality when we are observing applications otherwise rather similar. Perhaps we sacrifice long-range goals for short-range benefits.

In-Service Training of the Two-Year College English Instructor

The best candidate on paper, however, often needs help after we get him. To the best of our abilities, we help him develop as we feel a two-year college English instructor ought to develop. We want to share his ideas with our staff; we want him to understand our program. In short, we want him to mature as an instructor of two-year college English. This growth comes through both formal education (graduate school in the summer or during the semester) and in-service training.

Increasing interest by the Associations has encouraged the two-year English instructor to continue his formal education. Though no one, as far as I know, is being forced to get a doctorate, everyone is being urged to get thirty hours beyond the M.A. Some school systems have provided incentive by making a special pay scale niche for the M.A. +30. To encourage continuing education, many state universities have improved their course offerings. Their extension divisions feature more than audio-visual aids and guidance; they now offer first rate courses in language and literature. Government grants have improved slightly, though the two-year English instructor is still not so fortunate as his brother in natural sciences. Some institutions have full-time "experts" employed to supervise government and private moneys available for additional graduate study. I understand there is a fast-developing "art" of writing up applications for these grants. It seems some persons are moonlighting writing correct application forms. Some counties have programs whereby at county expense supervisors and administrators can be trained at the state universities. Doctoral aspirants are encouraged by a salary scale that makes the degree financially worthwhile.

To keep the staff reasonably up to date, we can employ a strong in-service training program, a program that takes advantage of what the department itself has to offer--the department program itself and the specialties of the various members of the department. The most effective guide is a clearly defined goal, a sound syllabus that spells out the program. At St. Petersburg Junior College we use what we call "The Green Manual," an introduction to our composition courses. (It's bound in a green folder and labeled Manual for English Instructors.) This manual spells out our goals. Although some feel that at times it is a bit dictatorial (a promising applicant turned down a position with us because he felt the manual implied a "lock-step" approach), it nevertheless is quite helpful to new instructors, who must know as quickly as possible what we are trying to do. In the manual we have spelled out the objectives of the courses. We also include such information as the number of papers the student is expected to write, directions for format, routine assignments, office hour procedure, filing policies. We even include six weeks of class planning for the inexperienced instructor who chooses to use it. The manual is in a constant state of revision. In view of shifting staff currents, we revise it every year--but guardedly.

Supervision, another method of in-service training, is handled by the department chairman. Though we don't ride herd on the new members of the department, we do try to keep in touch with them to see if they know what they are about and if what they are about seems to be within reasonable touch with department policy. The chairman frequently calls new staff members in for conferences and now and then, announced, sits in on their classes. Written evaluations of sessions he observes point out both strengths and weaknesses of the new instructor's techniques. New persons are urged to seek help from more experienced staff members through bull

sessions and through strategic office planning--putting new staff with carefully selected veterans.

New and "old" staff members often have exciting ideas. We encourage all staff to inform the department about their teaching techniques by adding their ideas to an extensive file of all duplicated materials employed by the department. Though much of the duplicated matter is only fair, having long ago been by-passed in favor of more effective materials, we have a variety of excellent planning, enough certainly to satisfy the demands of most of the members of the department. To facilitate the staff's use of this materials, we put out a "Directory" to duplicated materials available in the department files. This directory, kept up to date by the department secretaries, is distributed to the staff regularly. Each item recorded by title and accompanied by a brief annotation, the directory provides information on thesis statement construction, outlining, paragraph analysis, sentence construction, diction. In short, the techniques employed by any one member of the department are almost immediately available to all members of the department. Much of this duplicated material is of journal quality; some, of course, is not so good. Nevertheless through this intradepartment publishing we create a dialogue among department members, a dialogue that we feel is most valuable to successful teaching and good morale. Everyone knows what all staff members are doing.

Because our regular staff meetings are taken up with business matters--scheduling, new policies, textbook selection--to make it possible to share the strenghs of various staff members, we have introduced a series of what we call "seminars." At these meetings--usually held once a month--staff members with particular interests or specialties present papers on short stories, novels, dramas, composition techniques. The two or three times I have had the opportunity to speak at a seminar, I have found the staff receptive and the exchange worthwhile. In some instances we have had knock-down-drag-out arguments--we call them discussions. Sometimes for days we hear each other mumbling in the halls, shaking heads, deploring the crazy ideas some of us have about everything. But generally the discussions are lively, and though no one takes anyone's ideas lock stock and barrel, a few of the members of the department use some of the suggestions made in the seminars. Though change comes slowly, I found that the presentation I gave on the use of the overhead projector to teach composition had some effect on two or three of my colleagues. Granted, most still snear as I carry my "machine" down the hall to class: "Oh, goody! Home movies!" "Programming, I see!" "We play with our lit-tle toy!" "Make way for the machine man!" One of my more imaginative colleagues refers to me as deux ex machina. But two or three of the staff members have used some of my slides and four or five are now asking questions about various methods they might use to make slides of their own.

As a result of a lecture I gave two years ago on three of the short stories in our anthology, staff members still drop by my office to take issue with me. Last month we had a rather stimulating seminar on Faulkner's "The Bear"--short version. Incidentlly, at St. Petersburg Junior College we have three campuses with three separate English departments that the president insists must "keep together." We were able to schedule "The Bear" discussion at a convenient time and place to bring all three departments together. Even our seminar on outlining was lively. Good lord, who ever thought anyone could argue about outlining?

I must add a long parenthesis here. Because we have a rather large department (31 members on the St. Petersburg campus alone) and a large number of sections of basic composition every semester (approximately 80-90), we find it necessary to make the first semester of composition rather uniform from instructor to instructor. Not many of the students are with the same instructor for two semesters. Most must change horses in the middle of the stream. And they don't vote to do so. At any rate, we must prepare them to transfer without ruining their chances of passing the second semester's work. It is important that one instructor's demands and standards not be tremendously different from the others'. We give a department final examination that asks the students to reveal a general writing competency. Through the seminars we can stress techniques that will strengthen all instructors' approaches and underline the direction we feel the composition course should take.

As Russell Lynes points out, we are "student oriented," rather than content or research oriented. It seems that most two-year college instructors feel that publication is not a primary or even secondary concern of the two-year college instructor. We do, however, realize that publication is desirable, for a teacher of composition is likely to be a better one if he practices what he teaches. But not all of our staff have either the time or the inclination to publish, that is, send articles to PMLA, College English, English Journal, CCC Journal. Most of us do, however, take the time to write now and then something more than freindly letters. Some of us, for instance, frequently write papers for class use, not those we wrote for graduate seminars but papers we have been stimulated to write as a result of teaching a short story or as a result of a student comment that has opened up the material to us. Sometimes we prepare the assignment that we have given the students and then distribute the paper to the class for evaluation. The student criticism is often penetrating and always interesting. Sometimes, of course, we fake student themes and then distribute them for class analysis, telling the students in one class that the theme in question was writtenby a student in another class. When we use our own work, we admit it is ours and we kick it around. Of course the students are at first a bit hesitant--after all, teacher's?--but after they get the hang of it and after they realize that there is likely to be no perfect composition, they talk and often make astute observations. More important, however, through sniping at the instructor's work, the student becomes aware that writing is not merely something we assign; it is something we do--because we want to do it, because it is challenging, interesting. Though such writing is not publication, we feel it is near-publication and thus a kind of in-service training.

We use other methods of in-service training. The chairman's office contains a sizeable library that is at the disposal of the whole department. We trade interesting articles, routing a good essay around the department with a list of names attached--mailbox to mailbox. More often than not the article disappears for days, possibly weeks, beneath some stack of papers on the third name's desk. But it is surprising how much good stuff we read via the grapevine. (Students bring copies of Playboy. We don't route them around. But we do look at the pictures.)

Two important means of professional and personal growth have not been mentioned here, though both seem somehow related to in-service training, both certainly quite relevant to the continuing education of the two-year college English instructor. Travel--that summer in England or year on the continent--undoubtedly broadens the instructor at a time when international boundaries are becoming increasingly easier and more necessary to cross. A strong sabbatical

leave program to promote study and/or travel will encourage those inclined to stagnate to broaden their horizons. I have not stressed these means, for though we may encourage travel, it remains a highly personal method of professional improvement, most often determined by financial considerations. And sabbatical leave policies vary so from state to state, possibly from college to college, that it is difficult to make meaningful specific suggestions. Possibly through NCTE-CCCC's establishment of regional conferences on English in the two-year college, we may be able to encourage states or counties or communities or individual two-year institutions to adopt attractive sabbatical leave policies.

By recruiting the properly prepared two-year college English staff and keeping them up to date through a well-organized in-service program, we can enrich the English offerings we now have and keep ourselves sensistive to the vast changes taking place in the teaching of English all over the county. If it's true that we are riding in a Model T on an educational superhighway, then let's get the drivers who can stay on the right side of the median and keep the speed down to the legal limit, but not below the minimum.

I started with a quote. I'd like to end with one. This time from E.B. White, who also admires Model T's".

> It was the miracle God had wrought. And it was patently the sort of thing that could only happen once. Mechanically uncanny, it was like nothing that had ever come to the world before. Flourishing industries rose and fell with it. As a vehicle, it was hardworking, commonplace, heroic; and it often seemed to transmit those qualities to the person who rode in it.
>
> "Farewell, My Lovely!"
> Lee Strout White